

REMARKS

Claims 1-7, 21-22, 24-27, 29-31 and 33-34 are pending in the present application. Claims 20, 23, 28 and 32 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. Claims 1, 6-7, 25, 31 and 34 are independent.

The claims have been amended to further clarify the invention and/or to improve form according to U.S. patent practice. No new matter is added.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 20, 23, 28 and 32 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

To expedite prosecution only, independent claims 1, 6, 25 and 31 have been amended to incorporate corresponding allowable dependent claims 20, 23, 28 and 32 therein, respectively. In a similar manner, independent claims 7 and 34 have been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter therein based on the Examiner's comments regarding the allowable subject matter.

Thus, all independent claims 1, 6, 7, 25, 31 and 34 are allowable. Further, all dependent claims are now allowable, thereby placing the application in condition for allowance.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C § 103

Claims 1-3, 6-7, 21, 24-27, 29, 31 and 33-34 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Takano et al. U.S. 5,448,728 in view of Ito et al., U.S. Patent 6,292,445. Claims 4-5, 22 and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § as being unpatentable over Takeno et al. in view of Ito et al. in view of Miyamoto et al., U.S. Patent 5,867,455. These rejections, insofar as they pertain to the presently pending claims, are respectfully traversed.

Without acquiescing to any of the Examiner's allegations made to reject the claims, but to advance prosecution only, as discussed above, all independent claims have been amended to

Application No. 10/731,093
Amendment dated February 26, 2009
Reply to Office Action of November 28, 2008

Docket No.: 0465-1109P

incorporate the allowable subject matter indicated by the Examiner. Thus, the rejections are moot and should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

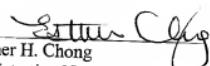
For the foregoing reasons and/or in view of the above clarifying amendments, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw all of the objections and rejections of record, and to provide an early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

Should there be any outstanding matters which need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Esther H. Chong (Registration No. 40,953) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: February 26, 2009

Respectfully submitted,

By 
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